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COUNTRY USSR

SUBJECT The Kherson Merchant Marine Academy: Its
Organization, Courses, and Personnel

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1. I attended the Navigation Department (Sudovoditelskoye Otdeleniye) of the Kherson Merchant Marine Academy (Khersonskiy Morskoy Technicum) [redacted] Upon graduation I qualified as a Sturman, or Navigator (ocean waters). The Academy was founded in 1839 and is still [1933] in Kherson. It specialized in navigation and was considered the best in its field in the USSR. The school is located on Krasnoarmeyskiya Ulitsa, opposite the Kherson city park. The railroad station is four kilometers to the north and the Dnestr River is to the south. The Academy occupied two buildings. The old one was a well built, white stone structure of one story. The new one (built, I believe, in the early 1930's) had three floors and was also of white stone.
2. The Academy consisted of three Otdeleniia (Departments): Sudovoditelskoye, Mechanicheskoye and Eksploitationnoye. The first department trained navigators, the second - ships' engineers, and the third - technically qualified port officials. Graduates of the Mechanicheskoye Otdeleniye qualified as engineers for both steam and motor engines (paro-tepkhodnyye mekhaniki). Students who attended the Eksploitationnoye Otdeleniye often became dispatchers, determining which ships should handle certain cargo, and often joined a planning section for transportation of cargo by water. The school gave a four-year course. Students attending the departments for navigators and for ships' engineers spent six months in class and six months at sea. As of 1939, I would estimate that there were about 650 students enrolled at the Academy: over 300 in the Sudovoditelskoye Otdeleniye, about 150 in the Mechanicheskoye Otdeleniye, and under 200 in the Eksploitationnoye Otdeleniye. A large number dropped out before graduation, however. As a result, in 1939, I would say that there were only about 30 graduates from the Navigation Department. There were approximately 13 permanent professors and instructors in this department. In addition, there were visiting experts who taught such subjects as ship construction, English, engineering (for navigators), radio-telegraphy, and electro-technics.

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3. The final examination given by the Navigation Department covered 13 subjects. This of course does not mean that other, general subjects had not also been studied. The 13 subjects were: celestial navigation, navigation, seamanship, theory and construction of ships, oceanography, meteorology, deviation of magnetic compasses, piloting, English, ship mechanics (or ship engineering), radio telegraphy, electro-navigational instruments (gyro-compass, deep-sounding instruments, radio-direction finders), and electro-technics (electric motors, draw works, winches, wiring). Incidentally, all new ships had electric equipment.

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